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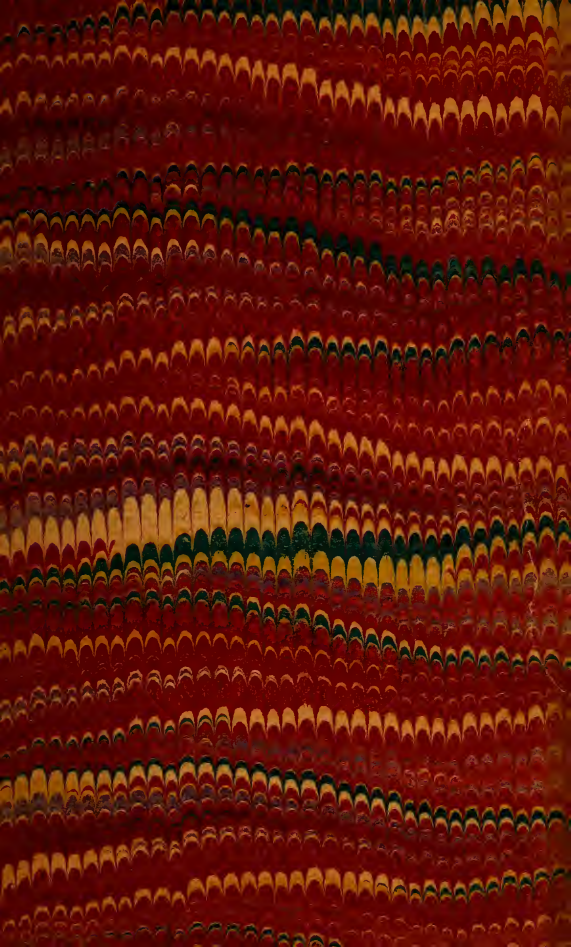
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**Pioneers of
Southern Literature**

John Pendleton Kennedy

John Esten Cooke

and

Other Southern Novelists

By Samuel Albert Link

Barbee & Smith, Agents
Nashville, Tenn.

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Pioneers of Southern Literature.

BY SAMUEL ALBERT LINK.

MUCH has been written of "the recent movement in Southern Literature," but little has been said of those pioneers who wrought while literature brought neither fame nor remuneration. With love for literature and love for the South, these toiled upward in the night. They deserve more than a mere passing notice. As precursors of the "new day" they should not be forgotten by their own people. For some years this writer has gathered material covering the period preceding and immediately subsequent to the war, and now embodies some of the results in a series of ten booklets, hoping that these may not be without value to those who cherish interest in the history of Southern life and thought, as well as to those engaged in the work of education.

The booklets will be issued at intervals under the following titles:

- No. 1. A Glance at the Field. Here a Tale; There a Song.
- No. 2. Paul Hamilton Hayne, Poet Laureate of the South.
- No. 3. Dr. Frank O. Ticknor, the Southern Lyric Poet; and Henry Timrod, the Unfortunate Singer.
- No. 4. William Gilmore Simms: The Novelist, the Poet.
- No. 5. John P. Kennedy, John Esten Cooke, and Other Southern Novelists.
- No. 6. Edgar Allan Poe: A Genius in Story and Song.
- No. 7. War Poets of the South. Singers on Fire.
- No. 8. Singers in Various Keys: John R. Thompson, James Barron Hope, Henry Lynden Flash, and Others.
- No. 9. Southern Humorists: Longstreet, Baldwin, Hooper, W. T. Thompson, Davy Crockett, and Others.
- No. 10. Political Writers and Historians.

Such division has been made as will in some measure cover the entire field from the earliest times until about 1870, when the leading magazines were thrown open to Southern writers.

A bibliography of the writers considered will be included in the last booklet of the series.

Price, 10c. per Number, Post-paid.

Barbee & Smith, Agents,
Nashville, Tenn.

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John Pendleton Kennedy.

IN Tuckerman's "Life of Kennedy" is told a story which illustrates the relative social advantages of politics and literature in ante-bellum days. Washington Irving and Kennedy were making a journey together in the western part of New York. The two, fatigued by travel, arrived at a crowded hotel late at night, and found their request for rooms refused. Mr. Kennedy took the landlord aside and suggested that the popular author, Irving, was entitled to special consideration. Not knowing that the gentleman who addressed him was one of the party, the landlord said: "Never heard of him, but that gentleman with him shall have a room; he has been in Congress and Secretary of the Navy." The



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John Pendleton Kennedy.

story of Mr. Kennedy's career apart from his work in literature is of great interest, since he lived through a large portion of the formative period of the American nation, and knew intimately a large number of the men who directed affairs. Besides, he was no unimportant factor in the councils of a great party noted for its large number of strong intellects.

In 1814 a little army of volunteers and citizen-soldiers marched from Baltimore in the direction of Washington, with the vain hope of saving the capital of the nation. Among that number was John P. Kennedy, a youth of nineteen just from college. From that time until his death, in 1870, he had more or less interest in public affairs. Once a member of the President's Cabinet, three times in Congress, three times a member of the Maryland Legislature, a lawyer of ability and a writer of no mean repute,

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for nearly or quite a half-century, he knew not only the ablest public men, but the greatest lawyers and best writers of this country, besides meeting many of those from abroad. To know his life is to know the political and literary history of the country through a long and important period of time. For many years he was one of the accepted leaders of the great Whig party, making many addresses and often occupying the same platform with Clay and other great leaders. Much of the time business interests other than law and politics engaged his attention; but, notwithstanding these drafts upon his time and strength, soon after his death, in 1870, his works were published, and consisted of ten volumes. Among these were three novels popular in their day—a political satire, a memoir of the life of Wirt in two volumes—besides numerous essays and addresses.

John Pendleton Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy's birthplace was Baltimore. This was also his place of residence most of his life, though, his mother being a native of Virginia, her son came to be very familiar with the country and people there. Many journeys were made on horseback over portions of the state, particularly during the summers. His mother was a Pendleton, and was related to many distinguished people in Virginia and other states. Through his mother he was cousin to Philip Pendleton and John Esten Cooke, and was related to David Strother, the artist, and author of the "Porte Crayon" sketches. John Kennedy, the father of the subject of this sketch, was of a Scottish family. One branch crossed over to Ireland, and, in part at least, finally reached America. John Kennedy came from the North of Ireland, and became a merchant in Baltimore. He was married to Miss Nancy Pendleton, a daughter of

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Philip Pendleton, of Martinsburg, Va., in 1794. Of his father, J. P. Kennedy says: "My father was a kind and excellent man. . . . He was respected and loved by his townsmen and was an upright, liberal, true-hearted man, who always did his duty and stood by his friend. He was involved in some unlucky speculations in 1804 by his partner, Mr. Benjamin Cox, which resulted in bankruptcy in 1809." A rich bachelor brother, Anthony Kennedy, who resided near Philadelphia, paid off the debts and enabled the father of John P. Kennedy to continue in business in a small way. That same Anthony finally left about \$70,000 to the four sons of his brother John, of Baltimore.

The Kennedys were Presbyterians; hence John P. Kennedy, who was born October 25, 1795, was duly baptized by a minister of that Church. He was sent to school at quite an early age, having various

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teachers, some indifferent, some good; one, Mr. William Sinclair, becoming his friend and guide for many years. A miscellaneous career of authorship was pursued by the ambitious boy, while an ill-planned effort was made to master almost all studies. In an autobiography, taken up from time to time, but never made very full, Kennedy says: "I studied Greek a whole winter, by rising before daylight. I read Locke, Hume, Robertson; all the essayists and poets, and many of the metaphysicians; studied Burke, Taylor, Barrow; worked at chemistry, geometry, and the higher mathematics, although I never loved them; made copious notes on all the subjects that came within my study; sketched, painted (very badly); read French, Spanish, and began German; copied large portions of Pope's translations of Homer, and wrote critical notes upon it as I went along; in short, I thor-

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oughly overworked myself through a number of years in these pursuits, gaining much less advantage by the labor than, I am confident, I could have secured, with better guidance, in half the time. In this reference to my studies I have run somewhat ahead of the due course of my narrative. What I have said applies rather to my college life than to that period when I was under the preparations of the academy."

Kennedy remembers himself to have been a thoughtless youth while living in town, but his overstrained efforts at study and authorship began in 1809 when his father removed to "Shrub Hill," a cottage in the country. On account of feeble health his mother traveled a great deal, always ending the circuit with a stay of a month or two at Martinsburg, Va. The embryo author was her companion much of the time. He says: "My college life, I may say, began in 1808, when I

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was thirteen years old, and ended with a diploma in 1812. I entered the Baltimore College at its first establishment. . . . In the four years of my college career I went through the usual course of Latin and Greek authors; a short and imperfect system of mathematics, in which I took the smallest interest; some physical science done up in a very meager volume; and, along with these, a barren and absurd scheme of logic in Latin, and some incomprehensible metaphysics. French I acquired with considerable accuracy, and could speak and write it tolerably well. I got some little Spanish also, though not much." "Shrub Hill" was near enough for college to be reached by pony or the gig. Not the least important thing connected with the college was a debating society. Of this young Kennedy continued a member for some years after graduation. During life he continued to have a high

John Pendleton Kennedy.

opinion of the usefulness of such societies. This debating society drifted him to the law as inevitably as fate, though in the meantime had come his soldier episode. Baltimore was for a time an extensive military garrison, with all the excitement incident to such situation.

The troops with which young Kennedy marched took part in the battle of Bladensburg, and were hardly as successful as the troops at Fort McHenry when Key wrote the "Star-Spangled Banner."

After his brief military experience Mr. Kennedy continued his law studies, entering the office of Walter Dorsey, Esq., an eminent practitioner of Baltimore. This city, numbering five thousand in Revolutionary days, had increased in population and importance. The foremost lawyers, the chief actors, and not a few noted newspaper men had graced its precincts. William Pinkney, minister to England,

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United States Senator, Attorney-General, soldier, orator, and scholar, made his home in Baltimore, and added to its fame. His son, Edward Coate Pinkney, wrote two poems, which still hold a place in all collections of best American poetry. David Hoffman and Brantz Mayer were not unknown as writers in their day. Edgar Allan Poe lived for a time in the "City by the Sea." Jared Sparks, John Pierpont, John Neal, and other knights of the pen dwelt there for a time. The city had some resemblance to an English town, and was possessed of an air of genial culture and good fellowship, most of the better families being intimate acquaintances and friends. A library existed, and reading was the fashion. Naturally a young man of Kennedy's taste would divide time between law and literature, contributing ever and anon to the papers. He was admitted to the bar and be-

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gan practise in 1816. While the practise was in a measure distasteful, he was a great admirer of lawyers, as shown in his "Life of Wirt" and in "Swallow Barn."

The bar of Baltimore was renowned at that time, and, in fact, in the South in ante-bellum days lawyers more largely than any other class possessed literary discrimination and ability. Those who knew Mr. Kennedy at that early period claimed for him special adaptation for his chosen pursuit. Letters wooed him anon. For a while he was editor of the Baltimore *American*. Later, with a Mr. Cruse, he issued from time to time the "Red Book," an anonymous collection of prose and verse somewhat similar to the "Salmagundi" of Irving and Paulding. This appeared at intervals for two years, and was chiefly advantageous for the practise in writing which it gave the young men.

From 1820 Mr. Kennedy was

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drawn more and more into public life, being in demand as a speaker at political meetings. Of his speaking it is said: "There was a magnetic charm about his manner, and often a finished cadence or quiet humor in his tone, which, combined with the good sense upon which his appeal or protest was based, secured him respectful attention and encouraging sympathy." He was what might be called a charter member of the Whig party, favoring John Quincy Adams, and supporting the various Whig candidates, state and national. His first term in the Maryland Legislature began in 1820. He was reelected for the two following years. In 1823 he was appointed Secretary of Legation to Chili, but declined the position. He was elected to Congress in 1838, serving three terms in all, though in 1840 he was elector on the Harrison ticket. In 1846 he was again elected to the Maryland

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House of Delegates and was made Speaker. In 1850, during the administration of Mr. Fillmore, Mr. Kennedy became Secretary of the Navy, rendering permanent and valuable public service. On the election of Franklin Pierce Mr. Kennedy retired from public life, not losing, however, interest in public affairs, since he, like his kinsman, "Porte Crayon," opposed the disruption of the Union in 1861.

Mr. Kennedy's first marriage occurred in 1824. His wife was a daughter of Judge Tennant, of Baltimore, and lived less than a year after marriage. Five years later he was married to Miss Elizabeth Gray, who survived him. This marriage was an extremely happy one during all the forty-one years which followed. Soon after this marriage he began to devote his evenings to more ambitious literary effort, though his days were sedulously occupied with legal business.

John Dendleton Kennedy.

The frequent visits to Virginia, begun with his mother and continued by himself on various horseback journeys, now became a part of his life. In company with his wife he visited White Sulphur Springs or other portions of Virginia almost every summer. This gave him an intimate knowledge of the habits, occupations, way of looking at things—in fact, the life of the people of the Old Dominion, dear to him as the abode of loving kindred and the scene where he first learned to love and survey nature. Added to this, the large hospitality, genial manners, and romantic history of a state of which he was half a native had always been matters of deep interest to him. The rising lawyer and politician endeavored to portray these things as he saw them in a series of elaborate sketches.

“Swallow Barn; or, A Sojourn in the Old Dominion” appeared in 1832. Simms published “Atalantis”

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the same year, and Martin Faber his first novel, a year later. Tuckerman, in the "Life of John P. Kennedy," says: "When 'Swallow Barn' first appeared few vivid and faithful pictures of American life had been executed. Paulding had described Dutch colonial life in New York; Tudor had published letters from New England; Flint and Hall had given us graphic sketches of the West, toward which virgin domain the tide of emigration had set; but, with the exception of a few impressive and finished legendary tales from the then unappreciated pen of Hawthorne and the genuine American novels, the 'Spy' and the 'Pioneer,' of Cooper, American authorship had scarcely surveyed, far less invaded, the rich fields of local tradition and native life. Accordingly 'Swallow Barn' met with a prompt and cordial reception. Emanating from a man of leisure, it was hailed as the

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precursor of a series of works imbued with the spirit and devoted to the illustration of our history, scenery, and manners. It was welcomed by rare critical appreciation." "The style of 'Swallow Barn,'" said the *New York Review*, "is polished and graceful; its distinguishing feature is its pure Americanism. The story of Abe and the negro mother, for pathos and power, is not surpassed by anything that has yet appeared in the literature of our country." "This," remarked the *North American Review*, then in its palmy days, "is a work of great merit and promise. It is attributed to a gentleman of Baltimore, already advantageously known to the public by several productions of less compass and various styles. The present attempt proves that he combines with the talent and spirit he had previously exhibited the resources, perseverance, and industry that are necessary to the accomplishment

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of extensive works. We do not know that we can better express our friendly feelings for him than by expressing the wish that the success which this production has met with may induce him to withdraw his attention from other objects and devote himself entirely to the elegant pursuits of polite literature, for which his taste and talent are so well adapted, and in which the demand for labor—to borrow an expression from a science to which he is no stranger—is still more pressing than in law, political economy, and politics.” In “Swallow Barn” is portrayed a picture of the scenery, manners, and rural life of Virginia soon after the close of the Revolutionary war. Says the work under consideration: “Swallow Barn is an aristocratical old edifice which sits, like a brooding hen, on the southern bank of the James River.” The author connects with this and the “Brakes,” four miles

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down on the same side of the river, much of the free and cheerful life of that time. There are the swamps and superstitions; the woodcraft; the county court; the plantation dinner, with its table, wisdom, and mirth; the pride, purity, improvidence, rhetoric, horsemanship, hunting, politics, humors, loves, and loyalty of native Virginian and visitor. A love-suit and a lawsuit are not forgotten, nor is the old mill, the spoiled old negro, the proud and high-spirited maiden, the crotchety and chivalric old man, the rides, the romps; in fact, no detail is wanting to make complete the picture of those days of high hopes and quiet but perennial mirth which made an Arcadia of the glorious Old Dominion. No historian can afford to neglect the pages of "Swallow Barn." The book had a run, and brought its author much kindly recognition. Twenty years, and a new edition was called for.

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The demand has never ceased, Putnam's having brought out a new edition two years ago.

In style Kennedy follows closely his friend Irving's "Bracebridge Hall," then ten years old and justly popular. In truth to local traits Kennedy perhaps excelled all who have entered upon a description of Virginia, though not a few have essayed that task, among whom may be named the original and picturesque John Smith; Jefferson, in "Notes on Virginia;" Wirt's "Letters of a British Spy;" Irving, in his "Life of Washington;" Dr. Caruthers, in "Cavaliers of Virginia," a work published in the same year as "Swallow Barn;" Thackeray, in the "Virginians," of which Kennedy is said to have written the fourth chapter of the second volume while in Paris.

In 1819 Mr. Kennedy made a horseback journey from Augusta, Ga., through the western part of

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South Carolina. Seeking shelter for the night on one occasion, he encountered a remarkable man, and heard from his lips the story of his exploits at a critical period of the Revolution. This became the basis of "Horseshoe Robinson," one of the most thrilling romances which America has produced. We are told that the scenery, incidents, and characters are faithfully reproduced from the reality ; that, when in after-years the finished story was submitted to the hero, he said : " It's all true and right—in its right place—excepting about them women, which I disremember." The time is in that dark period when the British arms had prevailed in the South, and a few patriots were holding fastnesses in mountain and swamp from which to harass British and Tory, that all might not be destroyed. The description of the battle of King's Mountain has been regarded as one of the best ever written. "Horse-

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shoe Robinson" was published in 1836, and was received with marked favor. By another hand it was effectively dramatized nearly a quarter of a century later.

"Rob of the Bowl," Mr. Kennedy's third work, appeared in 1838, the year in which he was first elected to Congress. No doubt his public services for the next few years cut short further excursions into the domain of romantic fiction. "Rob of the Bowl" describes the province of Maryland in the days of the second Lord Baltimore, when the capital was Port St. Mary's, on the left bank of St. Mary's River. The key-note is historical. The dangers, the problems, the jealousies, the smuggling, the bitter feuds between the Church of England and that of Rome—all are vividly brought out. The characters make strong figures as they are portrayed. Being at the storm-center of politics, so to speak, his observations

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revealed themselves in 1840 as "Quodlibet: Containing Some Annals Thereof by Solomon Second-thought, Schoolmaster." Various phases of a partizan campaign are portrayed with ludicrous solemnity. "Memoir of the Life of William Wirt," in two volumes, by Kennedy, came from the press in 1849. During Mr. Wirt's practise at the Baltimore bar Mr. Kennedy had become his intimate friend. Mr. Wirt, rising from an obscure family and without a college education, had by patient study, noble ambition, generosity of heart, and grace of manner won his way to an honorable position in his profession and a warm place in the hearts of his friends. Like Mr. Kennedy, he loved literature, had gifts in that field, and ever hoped to be able to turn aside from the arduous struggle involved by straitened circumstances that he might attempt serious work in the field chosen

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of his heart. His "Life of Patrick Henry," "Letters of a British Spy," and various sketches are only tokens of that longing. On the death of Mr. Wirt, in 1834, Mr. Kennedy had delivered before the Maryland bar a eulogy on Wirt. This was a graceful and eloquent tribute which delighted his auditors and led, in course of time, to his selection as biographer.

Mr. Kennedy took the Union side at the breaking out of the war. At the commencement of the third year he wrote a series of letters for the *National Intelligencer*. At the close of the war these were collected into a volume under the title of "Mr. Ambrose's Letters on the Rebellion." He continued more or less interested in public affairs until his death, which occurred August 18, 1870.

Some one has said of Mr. Kennedy: "His life is greater than his works." His correspondence was

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extensive, and his addresses were of more than passing interest on account of the loftiness of tone and thought as well as the literary excellence. He was ever ready with a word of encouragement for young people in their struggles and discouragements, and no one was more delighted in their successes. His letters to literary men ever flow with cordial encouragement. Their projects found in him a sympathetic supporter. Washington Irving and Kennedy took to each other on first acquaintance and this soon ripened into lasting friendship. Visits were exchanged, and their letters to each other were in the most cordial terms. There was a tone of pleasant banter mutually interchanged between "Geoffrey Crayon" and "My Dear Horseshoe." His pleasant letters to Willis, Prescott, Simms, J. R. Thompson, Poe, and others, showed his unvarying interest in American letters. Thack-

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eray and other literary men visiting Baltimore found in him a ready coadjutor. While Secretary of the Navy he fostered the expedition of Dr. Kane to the arctic seas as well as Commodore Perry's mission to Japan. Richardson says: "Kennedy, like Paulding, filled the office of Secretary of the Navy, and well illustrated that union of wholesome manliness with bookish tastes which was beginning to be a characteristic of our literature. The turmoil of American politics has over and over again left place, in diplomatic service or public station at home, for historians, essayists, novelists, or poets, who also have been, like Kennedy, efficient and honored servants of their country and leaders of their party. . . . Had Kennedy's graceful pen been driven by a genius more forcefully creative, the result of his lifelong devotion to literature would have been considerable."

John Esten Cooke.

A YOUNG lawyer of Richmond, Va., published a novel in 1853, the scene of which was laid in the Valley of Virginia, so soon to be shaken by the tread of armies and made famous with the blazonry of stirring deeds. The success of this first effort sufficed to take the author from the bar into the fields of romance. The story was "Leather Stocking and Silk," published by Harper & Brothers. The author's name was not then attached to the book, but was soon to grace the title-pages of other and better works. The "Virginia Comedians," in two volumes, by John Esten Cooke, appeared in 1854. The same year was likewise productive of the "Youth of Jefferson," based on the letters of that statesman. The newly found pen

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of the rising author was not allowed much rest, as "Ellie," a novel, was published at Richmond in the following year. Again, the next year, the "Last of the Foresters" appeared from New York. The year 1859 was signalized by the publication of "Henry St. John, Gentleman," a tale of 1774-75, a sequel to the "Comedians." In addition to these more ambitious works, the same facile pen had written regularly for Putnam's and Harper's Magazines, besides furnishing prose and verse for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, around which even then clustered memories of Poe.

These few years had been prolific, but Virginia called for her sons, and the pen was laid aside for the sword. The private became the captain, and served on the staff of Gens. Stuart and Pendleton. The heroic deeds which he witnessed thenceforward projected themselves into his best romances.

John Esten Cooke.

Capt. Cooke is *par excellence* the novelist as well as historian of the matchless campaigns of Lee and Jackson.

John Esten Cooke was born at Winchester, Va., November 3, 1830. His father, John Rogers Cooke, was one of the most distinguished lawyers of Virginia, practising for more than forty years. During that time he took part in nearly all the great cases carried to the higher courts. In 1829 he was a member of the convention which framed the constitution of Virginia, and was a member of the committee which drafted that instrument, serving with Chief-Justice Marshall, ex-President Madison, and John Randolph. Gen. Philip St. George Cooke, the uncle of John Esten, was a Federal soldier during the war, although his son-in-law was the brave and dashing Confederate cavalry leader, Gen. J. E. B. Stuart. John Esten Cooke's mother was Miss Maria, daughter

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of Philip Pendleton, of Martinsburg, Va., and hence a sister of J. P. Kennedy's mother. Some one has claimed that the chief families of the Old Dominion are all related. Who has not heard of the poem "Florence Vane?" This has been translated into many languages, and has been set to music by celebrated composers. Other poems by Philip Pendleton Cooke were very popular. "Froissort Ballads," and other poems, were edited by this brother of the younger novelist.

Mr. J. E. Cooke's early boyhood was spent at "Glengary," his father's country-seat, in the Valley of Virginia. When he was ten years of age his father removed to Richmond to practise in the court of appeals. John Esten attended an ordinary Virginia school, his last teacher being Dr. Burke, of Richmond, an excellent teacher of languages. He left school at the age of sixteen to study law with his fa-

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ther, and was admitted to the bar before he was twenty - one. He seems to have practised three or four years, but, judging from the rapidity with which his books came from the press after the first was published, the disciple of Blackstone was already intent upon authorship. What leads a young man toward literary effort is often difficult to discover. The *Southern Literary Messenger* had attracted favorable notice. Some men of ability were among its contributors. William Wirt had dabbled in literature, his cousin Kennedy had entered the field of letters and plucked not a few laurels. Cooper had found fertile fields in the North, and William Gilmore Simms was busy with the legends and history of the South.

This is Mr. Cooke's own version of his literary aspirations: "My aim has been to paint the Virginia phase of American society, to do

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for the Old Dominion what Cooper has done for the Indians, Simms for the Revolutionary drama in South Carolina, Irving for the Dutch Knickerbockers, and Hawthorne for the weird Puritan life of New England." It is said that Irving exercised a strong spell over the imagination of Cooke. Mr. Eugene L. Didier tells of a visit made to Irving as one of the brightest recollections of John Esten Cooke's life. From his youth he had admired "Geoffrey Crayon," "Bram Bones," "Rip Van Winkle," and "Ichabod Crane" had been real beings. How delightful, then, must have been anticipations of meeting with the veteran author at "Sunnyside!" This is the story: The first sight of the object of his youthful admiration was certainly a disappointment. He was short and stout, and his countenance gave no outward indication of the intelligence within. He looked more like a plain country

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gentleman with a taste for raising the best breed of cattle or the biggest turnips than a man possessing the rare literary taste of the author of the "Sketch Book." But it soon became apparent that there was more about the serene old gentleman than was seen at the first glance. The tranquillity of his manner was not the torpor of a dull intellect, but the repose of power. He was full of anecdotes of the authors and artists whom he had known during his long and varied experience at home and abroad: Scott, Moore, Allston, Leslie, G. P. R. James, Dickens, etc. He spoke of the frequent visits of Louis Napoleon to "Sunnyside" on his way to West Point, when he was in America in 1839. He was very silent and reserved, but was perfectly well-bred. "Now he is an emperor!" exclaimed Irving. "What a strange world this! I knew the empress when she was a little girl in Ma-

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drid, and have often dandled her on my knee—Eugenie Montijo. I saw her afterward, when she was a grown girl, with remarkably fine head and beautiful bust and shoulders. She used to go to the fancy balls in Spain as a female mousquetaire. The last time I was in Washington, and saw Calderon, the Spanish minister, he said to me: ‘Good heaven, Irving, think of it! little Eugenie Montijo an empress! Hump! hump!’”

We are told that Mr. Cooke was possessed of a very attractive personal appearance. He was of medium height, well-formed, and had dark features, fine eyes with winning expression, and that courtly grace which he was wont to describe in the Old Virginia cavalier. A devoted student, he preferred that life to all others. What might have been his career or his choice of subjects but for the war it is, of course, difficult to surmise. He had

John Esten Cooke.

shown a preference for capital and brocade rather than for wigwam and cabin. The statesmen and beauties of picturesque old Williamsburg seem to have held a fascination for him. In and near the streets and mansions, the Raleigh Tavern, and the theater of what was once the Southern Boston, occurs the action of the "Virginia Comedians." Of the sequel to this work, "Henry St. John, Gentleman," James Wood Davidson says: "This again is a tale of pre-Revolutionary days, located principally in the county of Prince George, Va., and is full of the fire and iron of those times. A Southern critic has pronounced this, 'by great odds, the best American historical novel,' and there are weighty reasons for the opinion." Of this story, nearly a quarter of a century after the issuance of the first edition, its author wrote as follows: "This era of fullest development was that chosen by the writer

John Esten Cooke.

for his picture of Virginia society. It is the moment when all the features which distinguish the race are seen in the boldest relief. What precedes it is the period when the community, in process of formation, has lived in and for itself. What follows it is the new age, when the colony has become a unit of the republic. That fact necessarily worked a very great change in society; the new régime effaced the old; and thus the years just preceding the final conflict with England present the fullest and most characteristic picture of the Virginia people. The turbulent old adventurers had been succeeded by quiet citizens; the rough swordsmen who had fought with Bacon against Charles II. by ruffled dignitaries—powdered planters, who lived in luxury on their estates amid swarms of dependents, administered justice in the county courts, watched over their Church as energetic vestry-

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men, sat as members of the burgesses, and ruled society as its natural lords. The rough old society had thus flowered into what very much resembled an aristocracy; but the student, looking closer, will see many traits to modify the picture. Under the surface of the pompous old 'nabob' was the obstinate manhood of a strong race. His misfortune is that his critics have looked only at the surface. They have been blinded by that imposing apparatus of class distinctions, by what one might see anywhere in America at that time, the spectacle of superbly dressed men and women in silks and laces rolling in their chariots, making formal Old World bows as they moved in the royal minuet, superbly conscious, one would say, that the world was made only for themselves. But all this splendor of living did not prevent the Virginia planter from being a type of the highest manhood. In

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all times he had stood up for his right as a freeman."

At the beginning of the war John Esten Cooke entered the Confederate army as a private, serving first in the artillery and afterward in the cavalry. He was on the staff of Gen. J. E. B. Stuart a large portion of the time, and took part in most of the battles fought in Virginia. At Lee's surrender he was inspector-general of the horse-artillery of the army of Northern Virginia. The highest encomiums have been passed upon his soldierly qualities, but his pen seems not to have been altogether idle even in those stirring times, since a sketch of Stonewall Jackson was published in Richmond in 1863, which proved to be his production, and which was enlarged in 1866 to "Life of Stonewall Jackson." At the close of the war Capt. Cooke returned to the Valley of Virginia, the home of his early childhood, and the scene

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of much of the war drama where he had marched and fought with the "foot cavalry" of Jackson, and where "Jeb" Stuart's bold riders had fearlessly followed their leader's plume and song.

In 1867 John Esten Cooke was most happily married to Miss Mary Frances Page, and their home thenceforward was the "Briars," in the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah. His neighbors were the Nelsons, the Pages, the Randolphs, and others of the best families of Virginia. He lived and enjoyed until his death, in 1886, the free and easy life of the Virginia gentleman—plenty of horses, plenty of dogs, with hunting and fishing, reading and writing, to vary the monotony. He had ever been a lover of good books, and gathered around him a goodly collection. He keenly enjoyed the sport of hunting, and there was fine sport in the Shenandoah mountains, and fish abounded in the mountain

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streams. Six o'clock in the morning found him in the library, as he considered the early morning hours the best for literary work.

The first book which Capt. Cooke published after the war was "Surry of Eagle's Nest." This is said to have been written in the autumn of 1865, though no doubt much of the material had already been prepared. It is difficult to conceive how a more thrilling war romance could be written. Pelham, Ashby, Stuart, Jackson, Lee—where could such actors be had for another drama? The story was not one which the novelist had dreamed, was not one whose materials had been gathered by reading or hearsay, but he recorded what he had seen Lee, Jackson, and Stuart do, and what he had heard them say. The author had "hung up a dingy gray uniform and battered old saber," and proposed to tell the story for his children and grandchildren

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as they clustered in fancy about his knees. This was a work of love such as had fallen to the lot of few men. Says the writer: "I think those dear coming grandchildren will take an interest in my adventures. They will belong to the fresh, new generation; and all the jealousies, hatreds, and corroding passions of the present epoch will have disappeared by that time. Simple curiosity will replace the old hatred, the bitter antagonism of the partizan will yield to the philosophic interest of the student, and the events and personages of this agitated period will be calmly discussed by the winter fireside. How Lee looked and Stuart spoke, how Jackson lived that wondrous life of his, and Ashby charged upon his milk-white steed—of this the coming generations will talk, and I think they will take more interest in such things than in the most brilliant arguments about secession.

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Therefore, good reader, whom I will never see in the flesh, I am going to make some pictures, if I can, of what I have seen. Come! Perhaps, as you follow me, you will live in the stormy days of a convulsed epoch, breathe its fiery atmosphere, and see its mighty forms as they defile before you in a long and noble line. To revive those days, surround you with that atmosphere, and reproduce those figures which have descended into the tomb, is the aim which I proposed to myself in writing these memoirs."

It might seem that "Surry of Eagle's Nest" has too many war heroes to move easily, yet among them moves the hero, Col. Surry, the proud May Beverly, the brave Mordaunt, the delightful Violet Grafton, and a well-drawn villain, Fenwick. The pathos of the mighty struggle pours itself into the book as one by one Pelham,

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Ashby, Jackson, and Stuart fall in battle. We catch something of the sense of desolation which crept into the hearts of the survivors when so many heroes had perished.

The story became popular immediately on publication, seven editions being sold in a short time. The transition from "Surry of Eagle's Nest" to the "Life of Stonewall Jackson" was easy, and was made the following year. The author had now found his field, and deeds of heroic endeavor had found a faithful and enthusiastic chronicler. No wonder need be expressed that he should work a field which had proved so popular. In close succession followed "Mohun," "Hilt to Hilt," "Hammer and Rapier," and "Wearing the Gray"—all written *con amore* by a man who knew what he wrote, and all having about them an atmosphere of chivalric deeds. A brief return to colonial Virginia occurs in "Fairfax; or,

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The Master of Greenway Court," which appeared in 1868. The complaint is made that the old earl, who had always been a figure of interest, did not find in this case a historian who devoted a sufficient amount of time and attention to the elucidation of his subject. How could he return to those earlier days with characters of larger proportions so near at hand? Complaint is made again that Virginia in the war hid from his vision all men and deeds not of her borders.

John Esten Cooke must ever remain preeminently the novelist of the war from the Southern standpoint. While ever an ardent Southerner, he wrote without bitterness. Of the times when the Grays and Blues opposed each other he says: "I think of it without bitterness. God did it—God the almighty, the all-wise—for his own purpose. I do not indulge in repinings or reflect with rancor upon the issue of the

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struggle. I prefer recalling the stirring adventures, the brave voices, the gallant faces; even in that tremendous drama of 1864-65 I can find something besides blood and tears."

Perhaps a complete bibliography of Capt. Cooke's works has not been made, but in addition to those already mentioned in this sketch the following may be found in Appleton's "Cyclopedia:" "Out of the Foam" (1859); "The Heir of Gaymount" (1870); "Life of Gen. R. E. Lee" (1871); "Dr. Van Dyke, a Story of Virginia in the Last Century" (1872); "Her Majesty the Queen" (1873); "Pretty Mrs. Gaston, and Other Stories" (1874); "Justin Harley" (1874); "Canolles, a Story of Cornwallis' Virginia Campaign" (1877); "Professor Pressensee, a Story" (1878); "Virginia Bohemians and Stories of the Old Dominion" (1879); "Virginia: A History of the Peo-

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ple," Boston (1883); "Maurice Mystery" (1885).

Much of Cooke's writing lies scattered through the pages of various periodicals, and has never been collected into book form. His "History of Virginia," for the Commonwealth Series, is one of the most delightful volumes of that entire series, and is itself as wonderful as a romance. Just a short time before his death he said: "Mr. Howells and the other realists have crowded me out of the popular regard as a novelist, and have brought the kind of fiction I write into general disfavor. I do not complain of that, for they are right. They see, as I do, that fiction should faithfully reflect life, and they obey the law, while I was born too soon, and am now too old to learn my trade anew; but in literature, as in everything else, advance should be the law, and he who stands still has no right to complain if he is left be-

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hind. Besides, the fires of ambition are burned out of me, and I am serenely happy. My wheat-fields are green as I look out from the porch of the 'Briars,' the corn rustles in the wind, and the great trees give me shade upon the lawn. My three children are growing up in such nurture and admonition as their race has always deemed fit, and I am not only content but very happy, and much too lazy to entertain any other feeling toward my victors than one of warm friendship and sincere approval." Notwithstanding this admission against himself, the sale of his books, particularly his war stories, continues, and is likely to continue until the deeds they portray have faded much farther into the dim distance. Cooke did not altogether neglect poetry, though one poem by his brother outshines all that he wrote.

Even while happy at the "Briars" amid his pleasant sur-

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roundings and with his wife, whom he found so like an angel, we can not but imagine him sometimes heaving a sigh and dropping a tear for his fallen comrades, particularly for the gallant Stuart, whose plumes he had so often seen waving in the desperate charge. No more fitting close can be made than to give a portion of Capt. Cooke's

BEREAVED.

Dear comrades, dead this many a day,

I saw you weltering in your gore,
After three days amid the pines

On the Rappahannock shore,
When the joy of life was much to me,
But your warm hearts were more.

.

You lived and died true to your flag,
And now your wounds are healed, but
sore

Are many hearts that think of you
Where you have gone before.

Peace, comrade! God bound up those
forms!

They are whole forevermore!

Those lips this broken vessel touched;
His, too, the man we all adore,

John Esten Cooke.

That cavalier of cavaliers,
Whose voice will ring no more,
Whose plume will float amid the storm
Of battle nevermore!

.

Never was cavalier like ours,
Not Rupert in the years before!
And when his stern, hard work was
done,
His griefs, joys, battles o'er,
His mighty spirit rode the storm
And led his men once more.

He lies beneath his native sod,
Where violets spring or frost is hoar;
He recks not; charging squadrons watch
His raven plume no more,
That smile we'll see, that voice we'll
hear,
That hand we'll touch no more!

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THE romance of history pertains to no human annals more strikingly than to the early settlement of Virginia. The mind of the reader at once reverts to the names of Raleigh, Smith, and Pocahontas. The traveler's memory pictures in a moment the ivy-mantled ruin of old Jamestown." Thus wrote Dr. WILLIAM A. CARUTHERS, in the year 1834, at the head of the first chapter of the "Cavaliers of Virginia." Dr. Caruthers was born in Virginia about the beginning of the century, and died at Savannah, Ga., where he had followed his profession for some years. He was a student of Washington College, Virginia, in 1818, and afterward was educated as a physician. The record of his works runs as follows: The "Cavaliers of Virginia" (1834), the "Knights of the Horseshoe" (1845), the "Ken-

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tuckian in New York," and a "Life of Dr. Caldwell." He wrote for the *Knickerbocker*, of New York, and for the *Magnolia* and other Southern magazines.

The "Cavaliers of Virginia" is a spirited historical romance, the scene of which is laid at Jamestown, in the days of Gov. Berkeley, and one of the chief actors is the brave, and—the world now says—patriotic Nathaniel Bacon. We have here brought to view pictures of cavalier and lady, savage and wilderness, with loves, hates, and jealousies, showing that the people who founded a great commonwealth were human. At the close of the work we find the following "Addenda:" "Should the author's humble labors continue to amuse his countrymen, he will very soon lay before them the 'Tramontane Order; or, The Knights of the Golden Horseshoe,' an order of knighthood in the Old Dominion which first planted the British standard beyond the Blue

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Mountains." As we have seen, it was more than ten years before he fulfilled the promise of the "Addenda." Perhaps his work did not "amuse his countrymen" of Virginia, as he seems to have left the state, first for Alabama, afterward settling in Georgia. In course of time came the "Knights," and we could not very well spare the "Cocked Hat Gentry," since much of the story is history in which the real names of the actors are given. Spotswood and his followers found it necessary to shoe their horses for the first time after leaving the soft soil of the tide-water region. This became the emblem of knighthood on their return. To the peerless riders who with him had laid open the fair valley of Virginia Gov. Spotswood presented ornaments of gold wrought into the shape of horseshoes. The inscription on one side was, "Tramontane Order;" on the other, "*Sic juvat transcendere montes.*" The literary instinct was

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strong in Dr. Caruthers. Although his house and books were burned, he continued to gather material, and brought out his works at a time when his people were not clamoring very loudly for an output of literature.

NATHANIEL BEVERLY TUCKER is said to have excelled any of his Virginia contemporaries as a writer. His novel, the "Partizan Leader," made quite a sensation. It was first published in 1836, but was suppressed for political reasons. The work was privately printed with a date twenty years in advance of the time of publication, and tells by anticipation almost exactly what took place a little more than twenty years later. The story opens when the South and North have separated, and gives pictures of Virginia occupied by troops, as happened during the war between the states. The book was printed in New York in 1861 by those hostile to the South to prove that secession had been prearranged for a quarter of a cen-

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tury. The reprint was called a "Key to the Disunion Conspiracy." Beverly Tucker, as he was usually called, was the author of one other novel, "George Balcombe," besides essays and various law publications. He was born in 1784, and died in 1851. He was educated at William and Mary, and practised law in Missouri, where for a time he was judge of the circuit court. Returning to Virginia, he was elected Professor of Law in William and Mary in 1834, and held the place until his death. Nathaniel Beverly was the second son of St. George Tucker, and half-brother of John Randolph. His father had written one notable poem, as we have seen elsewhere, besides dramas, satirical odes, essays on slavery, and various works on law.

Since a large number of the Tuckers have been literary men as well as jurists, it will simplify the matter to say: ST. GEORGE, the father of Nathaniel Beverly, was born

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in Bermuda Island in 1852, came to Virginia to receive his education, and finally settled there, bearing arms in defense of the colonies in 1777. The following year he was married to Frances Bland, the mother of John Randolph. GEORGE TUCKER, jurist, essayist, and novelist, was a relative, and was educated by St. George. He was the author of numerous works, including a novel, the "Valley of the Shenandoah," which was reprinted in England, and translated into German. HENRY ST. GEORGE, the elder brother of Nathaniel Beverly, was a jurist, author of various law publications, judge, and member of Congress. The third son of Henry St. George, ST. GEORGE, JR., died from exposure in the seven days' battles around Richmond. He was the author of "Hansford, a Tale of Bacon's Rebellion," published at Richmond before the war.

One writer for youth should not be omitted from this collection,

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though his works are so well known that an extended notice is unnecessary. FRANCIS ROBERT GOULDING was a native of Georgia, and was born September 28, 1810, in Liberty County, near Midway. He died August 21, 1881, and is buried at Roswell, Ga. Dr. Goulding graduated in the University of Georgia, at Athens, in 1830, and finished the course in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Columbia, S. C., in 1833. The failure of his voice debarred him from preaching, and he became a writer of books, being surprised at his own success. A desire to instruct and amuse his own children caused him to commence the "Young Marooners" in 1847. The work was not completed until 1850, and was two more years in finding a publisher. It was declined in New York and neglected for a time in Philadelphia, until on one occasion the one who passes upon the manuscript in such cases chanced to make a casual ex-

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amination of the "Young Marooners," as the work was called, after having been named two or three times. The passing glance of the manuscript-reader deepened into intense interest, and the work was brought out at once. Three editions were issued the first year, and it was soon reprinted in England and Scotland by at least half a dozen houses. Some one called it a "Crusoic book for boys, and the best of its class." Be it boy or man who begins the story, he is likely to finish, and then procure "Marooner's Island," a sequel, published in 1868. These works have been a source of pleasure and profit to thousands of young people in both America and England. Dr. Goulding's other works are: "Little Josephine" (1848), "Confederate Soldier's Hymn-Book" (1863), "Little Boy" (1869), and the "Woodruff Stories" (1870).

If we take popularity as the criterion of merit, the women of the

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South have not been second to the men as novelists, though how much literature has been produced posterity must determine. It is said that ninety-three thousand volumes of Mrs. CAROLINE LEE HENTZ's stories were sold in three years. Her nativity was Massachusetts, but she resided several years at Chapel Hill, N. C., where her husband was professor in the college. They lived in various Southern States, chiefly Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, and were engaged in teaching. Her work was done in the South, and her sympathies were ever Southern. Perhaps the best known of her publications were the "Mob Cap" and "Aunt Patty's Scrap Bag." Some of her other works were "Marcus Warland" and the "Planter's Northern Bride." Her view of the condition of the slave was very diverse to that expressed in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

A remarkable case of sowing in tears and reaping in gladness is

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shown in the account given by Mrs. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH of how she wrote "Retribution" while in charge of a school difficult to manage, and with her child at the door of death. Beginning with this in 1849, a long train of sensational stories followed in rapid succession.

As various publications have continued to come from the pen of "Marion Harland" in recent years, one can hardly realize that her first work, "Alone," came from the press in 1854. This for a time required a new American edition every few weeks, was reprinted in England, and translated into French. As "Hidden Path," "Moss Side," "Nemesis," "Miriam," "At Last," "Helen Gardner," and many others, came from a busy pen, hardly one reached a sale of less than ten thousand within a year after publication. Mrs. MARY VIRGINIA TERHUNE ("Marion Harland") is the daughter of Samuel P. Hawes, who was a merchant of Richmond,

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Va. In 1856 she was married to Rev. E. P. Terhune, who was then a Virginia pastor, but afterward took work in New Jersey.

Possibly no American writer of fiction has had so many readers as Mrs. AUGUSTA JANE EVANS WILSON. Although yet living, she has not published anything for some years. She has not been a prolific writer, but her works have had large sales. Mrs. Wilson was born at Columbus, Ga., May 8, 1835. On her mother's side she was descended from the Howards, one of the most honorable families of the state.

Her mother was to a large extent her teacher. When she was scarcely ten years of age her father moved to San Antonio, Tex. The Alamo and its gloomy story made a deep impression upon the tender child, hence "Inez, a Tale of the Alamo," was written when the author was fifteen. The Harpers published this story in 1855. Four years later her "Beulah" ap-

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peared. This has been said to be her own life story. However that may be, "Beulah" ran through many editions in a few months. James Wood Davidson says: "The author of 'Beulah' was styled the Charlotte Brontë of America. The compliment had some meaning in it." "Macaria" was published at Richmond in 1863, and was, perhaps, the first Southern war novel of the late war. Of course the subject and the times would have made it popular, had the writer not already reached her triumph. "St. Elmo," the much praised and much read, but also much censured, appeared in 1866. The little heroine knew so much, the hero was so strange, the language was so "high-flown!" Nevertheless, the book brought the author large returns. Her succeeding works are: "Vashti," "Infelice," and "At the Mercy of Tiberius." "Beulah" Evans, as she was sometimes called, was married to Mr. L. M. Wilson, of Mo-

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bile, Ala., in 1868. She resided near that city, in a beautiful home bought with the sales of her books, until the death of her husband, when she took up her residence in Mobile.

While much of the writings of ante-bellum times is considered by the reader of to-day a dreary waste of uninteresting pages, one must not imagine that these pages do not contain here and there wide patches of the bluest skies, the glintings of the mountain stream, the dewy fragrance of sun-kissed flowers, and the ecstatic songs of Southern birds, as well as the genial life of a people of a now half-remembered past. Many of the works mentioned in the preceding pages have no interest except as way-marks to show by what stages of effort our people have reached their present status in literature. Some will have interest only to the historian and to the student who keep track of the social conditions of a people in their various stages of progress. Others.

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will command a measure of interest as long as the world cares for dauntless deeds of high emprise, and for men of sincere convictions with noble courage and true chivalry. To the one who reads for pastime or merely to catch the transient phases of current life, most of these works are not even names. Literature has come to be a business, and the newer writers have caught the artistic form in a higher degree. In fact, the art of the seer is often in higher repute than his vision and message. But we appreciate the fact that the successors to these pioneers in the South know how to handle the tools of their craft to a better advantage both as to the form and body of their thought, and that they are gathering the golden grains of a wider and richer harvest.

"And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:

'The old order changeth, yielding place to new.'"













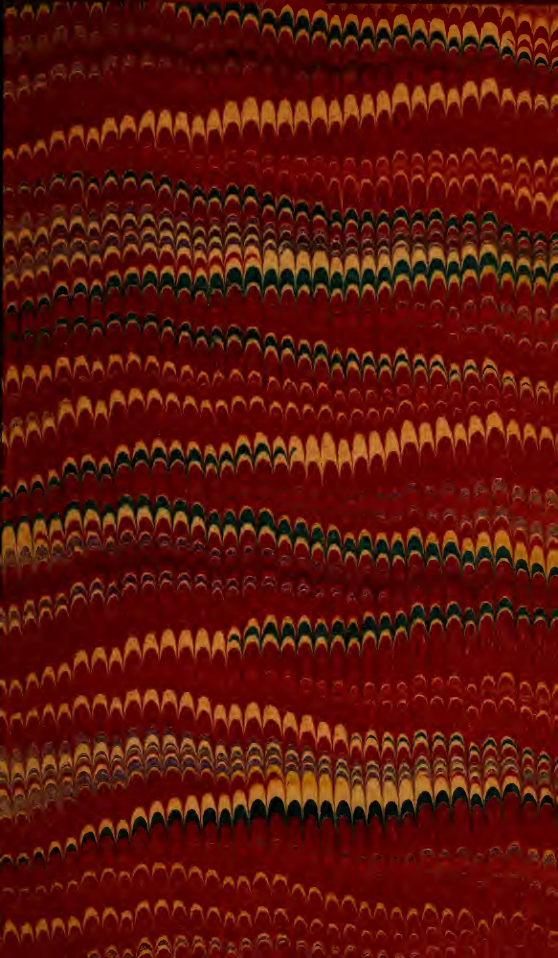












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